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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6200
INFO RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA 4536
BT

C O N F I D E N T I A L

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MANAGUA 3215

STATE FOR ARA/MGT, ARA/EX, A/SY/FO, A/SY/TAGS

PANAMA FOR RSS

E.O. 12065 NA
TAGS: ASEC, NU
SUBJECT: SEARCH OF U.S. STAFF MEMBERS' HOME

1. ON 7-3-80 AT APPROXIMATELY 1200 MR. PAUL PINA, DEP. ADMIN OFFICER, ARRIVED AT HIS HOME FOR LUNCH TO FIND 3 UNIFORMED MEN INSIDE SEARCHING THE BEDROOM AND OTHER ROOMS. THEY INFORMED MR. PINA THAT THEY HAD AN ORDER TO SEARCH THE HOUSE AND THEN PRODUCED A LETTER SIGNED BY SOMEONE IN THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR.

2. MR. PINA IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AS A MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN EMBASSY THEN TRIED TO USE BOTH THE TELEPHONE AND RADIO TO CONTACT THE EMBASSY. HE WAS FIRMLY TOLD NOT TO BY ONE OF THE UNIFORMED GUARDS. AFTER FINISHING THEIR SEARCH TWO UNIFORMED MEN AND THE CIVILIAN WHO HAD BEEN OUTSIDE LEFT THE HOUSE. ONE GUARD WAS LEFT BEHIND IN THE HOUSE WITH MR. PINA.

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3. ABOUT 45 MINUTES LATER THEY RETURNED. ONE NEWCOMER ENTERED THE HOUSE WHILE THE OTHERS REMAINED OUTSIDE. HE ASKED PINA FOR HIS ID CARD THEN STATED THAT HE WAS VERY SORRY BUT A MISTAKE HAD BEEN MADE. HE THEN EXPLAINED TO PINA THAT THEY WERE LOOKING FOR A FORMER NATIONAL GUARD, LTCOL DOWNING, WHO HAD LIVED IN THE HOUSE AT ONE TIME.

4. THE SANDINISTA IN CHARGE WAS APOLOGETIC. PINA REPORTED THAT THE GUARDS WERE POLITE BUT FIRM. HE STATED THAT THE ONLY THING LOST WAS A PAPERBACK BOOK (INSIDE THE CIA) AND AN ENVELOPE WITH SOME UNKNOWN CONTENTS.

5. THE PINA HOUSEHOLD STAFF INDICATED TO RSD THAT 2 OF THE SANDINISTAS CLIMBED OVER THE SIDE GATE WHILE ANOTHER CAME OVER THE MAIN GATE. ONCE IN THEY FORCED THE MAID TO OPEN THE GATE SO THAT THEY COULD DRIVE THEIR VEHICLE INTO THE YARD. NO ONE WAS INJURED.

6. THIS WAS IMMEDIATELY REPORTED TO MARCIO JAEN, COMMANDER OF THE FOREIGN EMBASSIES PROTECTION GROUP. HE DISPATCHED 5 MEN TO INVESTIGATE THE MATTER. 9, 7-3-80 THE RSD RECONTACTED JAEN'S OFFICE TO INQUIRE ABOUT ANY PROGRESS REGARDING THE INVESTIGATION. THE ONLY ANSWER GIVEN WAS THAT THE CASE WAS STILL BEING INVESTIGATED.

7. THIS APPEARS TO BE INCIDENT PART OF THE DRAGNET THE SANDINISTA POLICE HAVE THROWN AROUND MANAGUA TO RID THE CITY OF CRIMINAL ELEMENTS IN PREPARATION FOR THE JULY 19TH CELEBRATION. IT APPEARS TO BE A MISTAKE ON THE PART OF THE POLICE, ILLUSTRATING THIS NASCENT OUTFIT'S INEFFICIENCY. EVEN AFTER MR. PINA IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AS A MEMBER OF A DIPLOMATIC MISSION THE POLICE CONTINUED TO SEARCH THOUGH AFTER CHECKING WITH THEIR HEADQUARTERS THEY DID DESIST.

8 EMBASSY IS GRAVELY CONCERNED ABOUT THE THREAT TO LIFE AND LIMB POSED BY THESE YOUNG, ILL-TRAINED, AND IN MANY CASES NERVOUS SOLDIERS. THE EMBASSY HAS DELIVERED A DIPLOMATIC NOTE CONCERNING THIS INCIDENT. WE ALSO MADE A VERBAL PROTEST TO THE CHIEF OF PROTOCOL AND THE HEAD OF THE NORTH AMERICAN SECTION OF THE MRE. PEZZULLO

END OF MESSAGE

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